RAJYA SABHA

Friday, the 20th December, 2002/29 Agrahayana, 1924 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock,
MR. CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

CII's suggestions on drought

*441. SHRI RUMANDLA RAAMACHANDRAYYA:†
SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has suggested a series of short and long term measures, to help the States cope up with drought in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the response of Government on these suggestions?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI AJIT SINGH): (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (c) The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) had put a number of short and long term measures to deal with droughts and for conservation of water generally on its web-site in August, 2002, a copy of which was also made available to the Government.

The short term measures include resort to short duration crops with seed subsidy, Food for Work Programme, setting up of State Level Task Forces, discontinuance of subsidy on power in Blocks with serious water

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Rumandla Raamachandrayya.

scarcity, provision of uniform power for water supply, banning of inter-State movement of fodder and opening of goshalas, etc.

The long term measures essentially consist of a number of proposals for economizing water use and technological innovations in utilization of water. The other measures include sustainable land use through planting of forage crops and trees.

The above constitute well-known strategies of managing droughts and ensuring sustainable development. It appears that these suggestions are being taken up by the CII in its interactions with the State Governments. The suggestions of CII have also been referred to the Central Government Ministries/Departments concerned with the relevant subject matters. The suggestion regarding banning of inter-State movement of fodder, however, may not benefit the acutely drought affected States.

श्री रूमान्डला रामचन्द्रय्या: सभापति जी, सूखे के कारण सारे भारत के बहुत से राज्यों में किसान और वहां की जनता तड़प रही है। हालांकि भारत सरकार बहुत कुछ कहती रही है, लेकिन काफी समय निकल जाने के बाद भी जनता को जो लाभ पहुंचना चाहिए, वह नहीं पहुंच पा रहा है। इसलिए मैं भारत सरकार से जानना चाहता हूं कि उसके पास तुरंत जनता को लाभान्वित करने के लिए क्या प्रणाली है?

श्री अजित सिंह: माननीय सभापति जी, यहां से जो भी मदद प्रदेश सरकारों को दी जा रही है, उसके बारे में हम प्रदेश सरकारों से निरंतर संपर्क में हैं, लेकिन जो पैसा गांवों में किसानों को दिया जाना है, फूड फॉर वर्क के लिए मजदूरों को दिया जाना है, वह प्रदेश सरकार के अधिकार में है। लेकिन हम उनके निरंतर संपर्क में हैं और अभी माननीय प्रधान मंत्री जी ने जो घोषणा खरीफ लोन के ऊपर एक साल के ब्याज माफी के संबंध में की है, उस का फायदा तो किसान सीधे ही बैंक से संपर्क करके उठा सकते हैं।

श्री रूमान्डला रामचन्द्रय्या: सरकार किसान को जल्दी से जल्दी लाभान्वित करने का कार्य नहीं कर पर रही है। मैं जानना चाहता हूं कि उसके लिए क्या प्रणाली है? आप कह रहे हैं कि कार्यवाही कर रहे हैं। राज्य सरकार कर रही है, लेकिन आप क्या कार्यवाही कर रहे हैं, यह बताइए?

श्री सभापति: मंत्री महोदय, आप जो कर रहे हैं जल्दी कीजिए।

श्री अजित सिंह: माननीय सभापति जी, यह सवाल सी॰आई॰आई॰ के सुझावों के बारे में है कि सी॰आई॰आई॰ ने क्या सुझाव दिए हैं और उस के बारे में सरकार की क्या राय है? आप सूखे के बारे में यदि बहस करना चाहते हैं, तो वह हो चुकी है। अगर आप चाहेंगे तो दोबारा से बहस कर लेंगे।

श्री रूमान्डला रामचन्द्रय्या: आप सी॰ आई॰ आई॰ के सुझावों को देखते हुए क्या कर रहे हैं, यह बताइये?

श्री सभापति: बस, ठीक है। हो गया।

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Sir, if you take into consideration the recommendations made by the CII, I don't think the farmers will be benefited by that. According to them the farmers are not industrialists. They want to give all the facilities to the industrialists, but not to the farmers. I would just refer to one of the recommendations made by the CII which says that their loan should be converted into term loan. It is not going to help them. So, would the Minister assure the House that they would write off the loans taken by the farmers and at least one year's relief would be given to them. In some of the States, particularly in Rajasthan, the farmers have been suffering for the last four-five years. I would like to know whether you are going to write off the loans. If you are determined to give relief to the farmers, kindly do it at the earliest so that their lives could be saved.

SHRI AJIT SINGH: Sir, CII is an independent organisation. It is an organisation of industrialists. Everybody is free to give his suggestions. Their suggestions are based mostly on their interaction with the State Governments and that is how they have given suggestions. We have received these suggestions from their website. We have taken those from there. We specifically do not agree with some of their suggestions like they are saying that fodder movement should be banned between one State and another. We are against that because many States will suffer more. They have also suggested that the subsidized power supply should be restricted as a short term measure during drought. On the other hand, we believe that during drought, farmer needs more power, because he has to draw up more water; he needs it. So, these are just suggestions made by the CII. I welcome these suggestions, as I said, everybody is free to make suggestions. And, I welcome that industries are, at least, starting to think about farmers. We may or may not agree with their suggestions but, at least, they are thinking about it and, again, I will repeat that the Prime Minister has rescheduled the loans and for the Kharif, interests have been waived off for one year.

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, as the hon. Minister has mentioned one of the suggestions, long term measures essentially consist of a number of proposals for economizing water use. I think, after 30 or 40 years, we are going to have a water war in the world. What is the Government's plan for this long term economizing of water use, and are you proposing to bring a law for economizing water use?

SHRI AJIT SINGH: Again, this question does not flow from the question originally asked, but water is a problem, everybody recognises that. A task force for linking the rivers has been recently set up under the Chairmanship of Shri Suresh Prabhu. Also many other water conservation measures are being taken up not only in the rural areas but in the urban areas also. Different Ministers within whose purview these things fall, are looking into all these things.

श्री सभापति: यदि और कोई माननीय सदस्य इस संबंध में प्रश्न करना चाहे तो वह कर ले ताकि प्रधान मंत्री जी ने जो स्टेटमेंट दिया है, उसमें स्पष्टीकरण की आवश्यकता ही न रहे।

श्री सतीश प्रधान: सभापति महोदय, मैं कृषि मंत्री जी से सिर्फ इतना जानना चाहता हूं कि सी॰आई॰आई॰ ने जो काम किया, वह उन्होंने स्वयं किया या उनके ऊपर किसी स्टेट गवर्नमेंट ने या सेंट्रल गवर्नमेंट ने कोई जिम्मेदारी सौंपी थी? और सरकार ने इस विषय में क्या कोई शॉर्ट टर्म या लॉंग टर्म योजना बनाई है? अगर बनाई है तो वह योजना क्या है?

श्री अजित सिंह: सभापति जी, सी॰आई॰आई॰ के ऊपर कोई दबाव था या कोई रेस्पान्सिबिलिटी सौंपी गई थी स्टेट गवर्नमेंट के द्वारा, इसकी तो कोई जानकारी मेरे पास नहीं है। सरकार की यह जिम्मेदारी है और हम सब लोगों की यह जिम्मेदारी है कि किसानों के हित में, देश के हित में, ग्रामीण जनता के हित में कदम उठाए जाएं। इस संबंध में जो भी सुझाव होते हैं उन पर हम जरूर विचार करते हैं।

Johannesburg Summit on biodiversity sharing

*442. MISS MABEL REBELLO:†
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India participated in the Summit on biodiversity sharing and water, sanitation access, held in Johannesburg;

(b) if so, the plans formulated on the subject in the Summit; and

(c) the issues which the Indian delegation managed to press?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Miss Mabel Rebello.